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AUTHOR Auh, Taik Sup
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ABSTRACT

A longitudinal study was conducted to test whether the degree of campaign issue conflict portrayed in newspapers is linked to frequency of issue coverage in setting the agendas of prospective voters regarding important campaign issues. The research replicated and expanded agenda setting models of media effects, using 487 Indiana University students during the 1974 Bayh-Lugar senatorial campaign. Data on newspaper agendas were obtained from a content analysis of four newspapers during the two month period immediately prior to the election. Campaign issues were rank-ordered according to frequency of newspaper coverage and frequency of coverage combined with degree of conflict. Audience agendas were obtained on the basis of issues respondents were most concerned about, issues cited as reasons for supporting or opposing the candidates, and rankings of issues according to importance. Analysis of the results indicated that the audience's aggregate agenda rankings correlated significantly higher with the newspapers' aggregate agenda rankings based on issue freqency and conflict than with the newspapers' agenda rankings based on frequency alone, although the correlation was weaker than anticipated. (GW)

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ISSUE CONFLICT AND MASS MEDIA AGENDA-SETTING DURING BAYH-LUGAR SENATORIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1974

by

Taik Sup Auh

Virginia Commonwealth University

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INTRODUCTION

A heavy conflict orientation in the American press prompted V. O. Key to observe that "conflict, to judge from the headlines, is the entirety of politics. The American press, prone as it is to balloon casual differences into small scale wars, conveys an image of a whole society embroiled in intramural battles."[1] Much earlier, the Commission on Freedom of the Press charged that because of compulsion to attract a large audience, the press is preoccupied with reporting trivia and conflict.[2]

A body of media "gatekeeping" research substantiates Key's and the Commission's view of the American press. Buckalew, for example, found that conflict is an important dimension in the selection of news items for television presentation.[3] Radio news editors, it seemed, were not as interested in local stories that are new when they do not contain conflict. Of the three dimensions, i.e., proximity, timeliness, and conflict, the one that appeared to make a difference to the radio editors was conflict.[4] In a subsequent study dealing with the editing behavior of 15 newspaper editors and three television editors, Clyde and Buckalew found that conflict news element was significantly more highly valued than items lacking that element.[5]

While the concept of conflict has frequently been raised in studies of editing behavior, there has been little scholarly effort to explore the possible functional relationship between the media's emphasis on conflict and the audience's information holding.

In a rare study of its kind, Marceau examined the conflict-information relationship in the nation-building process, and contended that mass communication is dysfunctional in most developing areas. Mass communication hinders development, she argued, because these areas are "full of conflict and mass media become entangled in the conflicts, disputes and disturbances."[6] Several studies showed the possibility that communication itself may be impaired by extremely intense conflicts.[7]

Other students of the conflict school of thought, however, do not necessarily view conflict as counter-productive. Coser noted that "social conflicts--far from being only a negative factor which 'tears apart'--fulfill a number of determinate functions in groups and other interpersonal relations.[8] Key suggested a positive relationship between intensities arising from political conflicts and the possession of information about political policies.[9] In a study of community awareness of public issues, Tichenor and his associates found that learning and recall were significantly higher when the issues were presented in a conflictual way than when the same issues were presented non-conflictually.[10] These studies suggested that conflict is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for mass diffusion of information--especially in situations where the goal is widespread distribution of knowledge to a general population.

The notion of conflict--which by definition implies disagreement on an issue between two or more parties--becomes especially relevant to an election study. Hardly any election goes by without candidates exchanging fire about an issue. Often, an attack is made on a politician for spending too much money on welfare or too little; for being too strict about gun control or too lenient about it; for supporting an Israeli cause or for advocating a pro-Arab policy. Add to the list a more subtle form of criticism: "My opponent hasn't spoken a word about 'abortion'!" When the news media play up such issue conflicts, an impact is likely on the audience's perception of the candidates and their issues. The portrayed conflicts in issue stance become discriminating attributes on which the candidates can be compared against each other.

Recent media effect literature calls for an empirical verification of the relationship between conflict coverage and information dissemination. In reviewing literature on media campaign coverage, O'Keefe argued for content analysis aimed at determining how well the content provides voters with information explicitly drawing discriminations between candidates on relevant attributes, thus perhaps easing in one sense difficulty of voter decision-making.[11] Becker, McCombs and McLeod called for a study of the media's role in establishing the salience of various attributes.[12]

This study is an attempt to specify media's role in the development of audience's cognitions on major campaign issues. The thesis is that degree of issue conflict portrayed in the news is linked to frequency of issue coverage in setting prospective voters' agendas of important campaign issues. Applying a longitudinal survey design, this research replicates and expands the agenda-setting model of media effects using

student voters in Bloomington, Indiana during the 1974 Bayh-Lugar senatorial campaign. The research tests whether issue conflict portrayed in news stories about the campaign affected perceived issue salience to a greater or lesser extent than issues on which the candidates agreed.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Considerable research in mass communication has contradicted earlier work which concluded that the mass media have little effect on political and social behavior. Much of the current study suggests that news audiences, especially those of newspapers, acquire from the mass media an agenda of public issues and also learn the relative importance attached to those issues from the media.

Agenda-Setting Function. The new perspectives in the efficacy of mass media to structure our views of reality result from a shift of focus in communication research away from voters' conversion experience toward information gain. One of the most fruitful branches of reaearch to result from this reconsideration of media effects has been studied under the functionalist rubric of media agenda-setting function.

Bruce Westley illustrated the agenda-setting model in its simplest form, by presenting media agenda in juxtaposition with audience agenda.[13] In the model, first, there is a rank ordering of issues which constitutes a media agenda ($Agenda_1$) at a given point in time. Alongside it there are the same issues ranked by someone or something else ($Agenda_2$). The rank-order correlation between $Agenda_1$ and $Agenda_2$ indicates the degree of "fit": the more similar the two orderings, the closer the relationship. When the first ordering is the media agenda and the second ordering is the audience agenda, the idea of agenda-setting asserts that $Agenda_1$ caused $Agenda_2$.

A major difficulty with this model is that it is too pat and atheoretical. The causal linkage between $Agenda_1$ and $Agenda_2$ is devoid of a theoretical explanation, and the observed similarity between the two sets of agenda orderings remains largely unexplained. The model is conceptually inadequate mainly because agenda-setting hypothesis bases its theoretical assumptions on S-R learning paradigm, with its emphasis on trial repetition as explanatory concept. However, unlike nonsense syllables typically employed as stimuli in learning experiments, media agendas are extremely heterogeneous with respect to topical area and level of comprehension. Without control for those competing variables, media's agenda-setting power cannot be attributed to repetition effect per se.

The drawback of this model suggests that something is amiss in this explanation of agenda-setting, but what? At theoretical issue here seems to be "what causes the audience agenda ($Agenda_2$) to resemble the media's agenda ($Agenda_1$). What particular attributes, if any, of an issue actually bear on the perceived issue salience. Agenda-setting asserts it is primarily the display and emphasis that affect issue salience. Analysis of voting behavior suggests, however, that other mechanisms may also be operative in the process of audiences' perception of issue salience.

A simple act of voting requires individuals to make exclusive discrimination between two or more alternatives, on a number of relevant attributes which distinguish one candidate from another.[14] It is to the advantage of prospective voters, then, to incorporate into their repertoire a set of distinguishing attributes so as to make a "rational" decision about the candidates. Because of its ability to ease difficulty of voter decision-making, it is hypothesized in this study, a conflict-laden issue

can be learned more easily and made more salient than non-conflictual issues.

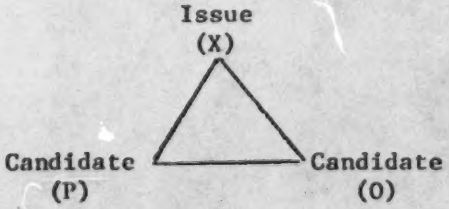
Balance Theory. Heider's central theoretical concept, balance, seems especially helpful for explaining the effects of issue conflict portrayed in news stories upon perceived issue salience. The balance theory posits that if all three relationships in the P-O-X triad are positive (e.g., P likes O, P likes X, and O likes X) or if two of them are negative (e.g., P dislikes O, P dislikes X, O likes X), the state is referred to as balanced; all other combinations are unbalanced.[15]

Cartright and Harary offer a variation of Heider's balance theory by taking the notion of balance "out of the head of P."[16] By doing so, Cartright and Harary render their model a broader applicability to cognitive units, social systems, or any configuration where both a relation and its opposite must be specified.

Much of what the press has to say about the candidates and their issue positions can be conceptualized in terms of the Cartright and Harary's balance model (see Figure 1). The basic ingredients in the media coverage of campaigns find their correlatives in the P-O-X configuration of the balance theory. Two contending candidates, the P and O in the triad, vie for a competitive position, and their confrontations often revolve around an issue, X, to which both P and O are oriented.

Figure 1

Balance Configuration



Although a candidate's orientation toward an issue cannot always be viewed in terms of the "liking" or "unit" relation, the P-O-X configuration intoto may suggest either a balanced or imbalanced state. The P-O relation in an election setting is always a competitive one and can be said to be one of mutual dislikes (P dislikes O, O dislikes P). An outside observer, e.g., a prospective voter may perceive a triad as balanced when there is a difference between P's orientation toward X and O's orientation toward X. A triad involving a perfect congruence between P's and O's orientations toward X will be perceived as imbalanced.

Cartright and Harary also make a distinction between the opposite of a relationship and the complement of a relationship. For example, the triad, P likes O P likes X, and O not-own X, is not defined as the imbalanced state, but rather as the "vacuously balanced" state. That is, they propose that "not-own" is not the opposite of "own," but rather the complement.[17]

Examples of "vacuously balanced" triad are neither unusual nor rare in campaign reporting. In the 1976 Republican primaries former Governor Ronald Reagan made issue of "detente" with considerable success; his opponent, incumbent President Gerald Ford, attempted to keep the vocabulary out of campaign rhetoric, with little success. Jimmy Carter, front-runner in the Democratic primaries, was the target of criticism from his rivals for being noncommittal or hebulous about the "burning" issues.

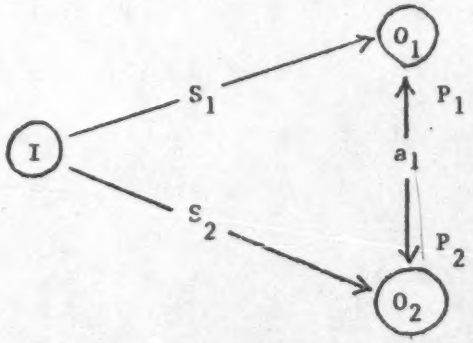
Although research generated by balance theory contradicts some of the specific theoretical predictions, there is considerable evidence that balanced states are rated as more pleasant and learned more easily than the unbalanced. Zajonc and Burnstein had subjects learn paired-associates triads and found that balanced triads are rated as more pleasant and learned more easily than the unbalanced.[18] In a series of studies, Gerald and

Fleischer had subjects read short stories involving P-O-X relationships. They asked subjects, among other things, to recall the title of each story, the names of the characters, and details about the plots. Interestingly, Gerald and Fleischer found that when the P to O relation was positive, subjects recalled more about the story when it represented unbalanced state. When the relationship was negative--as is the case with the election setting--there was more recall of the balanced story.[19]

Affective Relations Model. In his affective relations model, Carter postulates that the source of value for an object is potentially two-fold: a salience relation which indicates the "psychological distance" between an individual and a given object, and a pertinence relation which is an affective discrimination between two objects.[20]

Figure 2

Carter's Affective Relations Model



Where,

I is the individual in the orientation situation;
O_1 and O_2 are two objects from the environment which are situationally relevant;
a_1 is the pertinence relation, based on am attribute which both O_1 and O_2 possess to some extent;
P_1 and P_2 represent the extent to which O_1 and O_2 possess the attribute, a_1; and
S_1 and S_2 are the salience relations between I and the two objects.

Carter suggests that the discriminating postures of the individual in the two-object situation are evaluative. The evaluative mode entails two primary discriminations: inclusion and exclusion. Elections, as in any choice situation, require the voters to make an exclusive discrimination, and therefore the criterion referent is always exclusive.

Cognitive discrepancy, according to Carter, is aroused when the person makes an observation that the two objects are not exclusive, which is inconsistent with his criterion referent. In this case of a conceptual conflict, the person would strive to find an attribute on which the two objects differ. That exclusive discrimination would satisfy his criterion and thus resolve his conceptual conflict.[21]

Carter's model has an immediate theoretical implication to the "conflict" hypothesis of the agenda-setting effect. Its implications may be specified using an election campaign as an example. Hypothetically, in a campaign relatively free of issues, two candidates advocate--and the press so reports--that the Alaskan pipeline is the solution to the nation's energy crisis. Not only do they share their stance on the energy issue, the two contenders have not formed an opinion on other issues (hence, no media coverage).

Contrast this with a slightly different hypothetical situation in which one candidate advocates curtailing import taxes on foreign oil , while the other proposes the Alaskan pipeline to combat the energy problem. The latter example illustrates a conflict between the candidates; they have different views on the enery issue.

When the news media play up such differences, an impact on the audiences' perception of the candidates and their issues is inevitable.

Here, the energy issue makes the juxtaposition of the two candidates relevant. The choice of the two contenders now rests with the individual voters, be they environmentalists or industrialists. And their choice seemingly is an easy one because the voters will have obtained from the media a pertinence estimate for the two candidates.[22]

Alternative Model of Agenda Setting Effect. To a large degree, agenda-setting research to date has dealt almost exclusively with the relationship between the selection and display of issues in the media, and audience cognitions. Less attention has been directed toward the internal properties of an issue such as conflict.

Agenda-setting as a concept, however, is not limited to the correspondence between saliences of topics for the media and its audience. As McCombs and Schulte noted, saliency of various attributes of the objects reported in the media also rightfully falls into the conceptual domain of agenda-setting.[23] Stereotyping, for example, can be conceptualized in agenda-setting terms, because it concerns a set of saliences of particular attributes associated with an object.

Consideration of agenda-setting in terms of the correspondence between the saliences of attributes of various issues has conceptual advantage over the correspondence between the saliences of topics or issues. Media agendas, unlike nonsense syllables, are extremely heterogeneous in topical area and level of comprehension. Some issues can be learned more easily than others as a function of specific attributes present in the issues. For example, Tichenor and his associates found that learning and recall of issues of public importance were significantly higher when

the issues were presented in the context of a conflict story than when they were presented in a non-conflictual way.[24] There was a tendency for conflict perception and familiarity with an issue to go together (The rank-order correlation between these two measures was .42, $p < .05$, for 23 comparisons, with perception of conflict based upon open-ended items).

These considerations allow us to propose an alternative model of agenda-setting effect, which takes into account both the external characteristics (display and emphasis) and internal properties (degree of conflict) of various issues given coverage in the media (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Alternative Model of Agenda-Setting Function

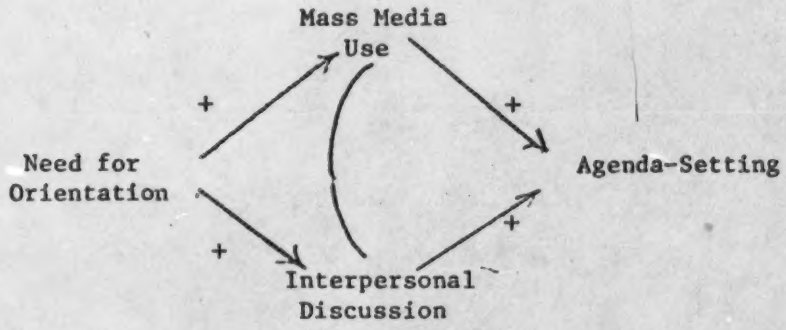
External Characteristics (display & emphasis)	Internal Properties (degree of conflict): high	Internal Properties (degree of conflict): low
high	High Perceived Issue Salience	Medium Perceived Issue Salience
low	Medium Perceived Issue Salience	Low Perceived Issue Salience

In this model, media agenda consists of two sets of agenda rankings: first, the ordering of issues based on external characteristics and the ordering of issues based on degree of conflict. The criterion measure of perceived issue salience is the sum of the external and internal values.

It follows from this model that an issue given scant attention by the media but high on conflict rating will be perceived as much salient by the audience members as the other issue low on conflict ranking but given prominent coverage in the media.

Two sets of media agenda rankings are developed in this study: one, based on sheer volume of coverage; and the other, on volume of coverage and degree of conflict portrayed in the news stories. Each of these media agenda rankings is correlated with audience's rank-ordering of issues, to test the research hypothesis that issue conflict portrayed in news stories about the campaign affects perceived issue salience to a greater extent than issues on which the candidates agreed.

To test the causal assertions of agenda-setting, the present study employs individual rank-order correlations with various media agendas (defined in the two different ways) as dependent variables and attempts to test the linkages over time among three independent variables considered as important in previous agenda-setting studies: need for orientation, amount of interpersonal discussion, and newspaper use. Specifically, this study focuses on the relationships suggested by earlier works and outlined in the following model of the agenda-setting process:[25]



METHODOLOGY

Content Analysis of Media Agendas

Newspapers, rather than television, were chosen for analysis of campaign coverage, because it was assumed they were turned to for more complete data and needed information.[26]

Data on newspaper agendas were obtained from a content analysis of four newspapers from September 1, 1974 to the day prior to the election. The newspapers analyzed were the Indiana Daily Student (the campus newspaper), the Bloomington Herald-Telephone, the Indianapolis Star and the Louisville Courier-Journal. These four newspapers were used by 89 percent of the respondents interviewed at time 1 and 91 percent of the respondents interviewed at time 2 for news about Indiana state politics.

These newspapers were searched for references to the Bayh-Lugar senatorial campaign in articles, editorials, letters to the editor, and news analyses. Campaign issues mentioned in the newspapers were coded into these categories:

(1) Abortion: constitutional amendment/Buckley amendment/conditional abortion/abortion on demand/Senate subcommittee on constitutional amendment.

(2) Amnesty: draft dodgers/Vietnam evaders/conditional amnesty/double standards (in applying justice)/screening board.

(3) Busing: racial integration/educational quality/court-ordered busing/forced busing.

(4) Economy and Inflation: roll-back of petroleum prices/interest rate hike/consumer protection agency/recession/energy crisis.

(5) Government Corruption: Nixon pardon/Watergate scandals/ corruption in Indianapolis police department.

(6) Government Spending: "big" spender/the Democrats/increase in Indianapolis budget/balanced spending/Nixon's budget/Ford's budget.

These issues were rank-ordered in two different ways: first, based on frequency of coverage in newspapers; second, based on the frequency of coverage and the degree of conflict. The number of stories mentioning each of the six major campaign issues formed the basis for the ranking of the issues based on the frequency measure. The ranking of issues based on conflict is discussed below.

Measurement of Issue Conflict

The following set of definitions governs the content analysis procedures for obtaining the degree of conflict portrayed in news stories:

(1) The unit of analysis is the statement, defined in terms of an assertion containing a complete idea about an object or issue. A statement is relevant when it refers to at least one candidate and an issue under analysis. A statement which makes reference to an issue, without naming a candidate, is non-relevant.

(2) Relevant statements include conflict statements (those statements which denote disagreement on issue stance), accord statements (those statements which denote agreement on issue stance), and neutral statements (those statements which contain neither conflict nor accord on issue stance).

(3) Some statements by themselves denote either conflict, accord or neutral meaning (hereafter referred to as "per se" statements). Other statements cannot be judged for their directionality unless and until they are evaluated in juxtaposition with other comparable statements (hereafter referred to as "per quod" statements). The judgment as to whether a statement falls into a conflict, accord or neutral statement category can thus be made on the basis of the two contextual criteria: per se and per quod.

a) A statement is conflict per se if the statement in itself denotes disagreement on an issue stance.
b) A statement is conflict per quod if the statement in itself denotes neither agreement nor disagreement, but when juxtaposed with other statements, the statement comes to denote disagreement on an issue stance.

c) A statement is accord per se if the statement in itself denotes agreement on an issue stance.
d) A statement is accord per quod if the statement in itself denotes neither agreement nor disagreement, but when juxtaposed with other statements, the statement comes to denote agreement on an issue stance.
e) A statement is neutral per se if the statement in itself denotes neither agreement nor disagreement on an issue stance.
f) A statement is neutral per quod if the statement in itself and in juxtaposition with other statements denotes neither agreement nor disagreement on an issue stance.
g) A special case of conflict per quod is where a candidate's statement on an issue appears uncontested (unaccompanied) by a statement of the other candidate on the same issue.

Table 1 below presents some of the example statements which fall into conflict, accord, and neutral categories. Contextual criterion specifies whether a statement should be judged independently (per se) or in juxtaposition with other statements (per quod) for its directionality, i.e., conflict, accord, or neutral.

Table 1

Conflict, Accord, and Neutral Statements
By Contextual Criteria

Conflict	Accord	Neutral	Contextual Criteria
Lugar is opposed to gun control.	Lugar opposes abortion	Lugar talks about busing.	Per Quod
Bayh favors gun control.	Lugar opposes abortion	Bayh talks about busing	Per Quod
Lugar attacked Bayh on gun control issue	Lugar supports Bayh's anti-abortion stance.	Lugar referred to Bayh's busing stance.	Per Se
Lugar is opposed to gun control; Bayh favors gun control.	Lugar opposes abortion; Bayh opposes abortion	Lugar and Bayh talk abouth busing	Per Se
Lugar lashed out at Bayh's gun control stance	Bayh said that he is in full agreement with Lugar's anti-abortion stance.	Lugar talks about busing in reference to Bayh's earlier remarks on the issue	Per Se

Measurement of Audience Agendas

The degree of importance that an audience member attributed to an issue was measured in three different ways. The first measure of issue salience, to be referred to as personal agenda, was based on the question: "Which topics raised by the Lugar-Bayh campaign are you most concerned about?" The second measure of salience, to be called discriminatory agenda, was based on the question: "Is there anything about (Lugar, Bayh) that might make you want to vote (for, against) him?" The third measure of salience, to be labeled as paired-comparison agenda, was based on the instruction: "Now, as I quickly call out some pairs of campaign topics, please tell me which one is the most important to you personally."

Independent Variables

Three independent variables are included in the analysis, and each is measured at two points in time. Listed below are the operational definitions of the variables and their central tendencies.

Media Use at Time 1 (mean=4.87; sd=2.34) and Time 2 (mean=4.80; sd=2.25) was measured by frequency of respondent's use of newspapers, because this study deals with only newspaper ranking of issues. The questions were: "Do you happen to read a daily newspaper?" "About how many days per week?"

Interpersonal Discussion at Time 1 (mean=1.14; sd=.39) and Time 2 (mean=1.22; sd=.47) consisted of the number of times a respondent cited interpersonal sources for information about the topic most personally important to him or her in the Lugar-Bayh race. The variables were computed from these questions: "Which topics raised by the Lugar-Bayh campaign are you most concerned about?" "Which of these topics is most important to you personally?" "Have you seen, read, or heard anything lately about this topic?" A score of one was accorded the respondent who did not hear anything from another person lately about the topic he considered most important.

A score of two was given the respondent who heard something lately, but did not hear most about the topic from another person. Finally, a score of three was assigned to the respondent who heard something lately, and heard most from another person.

Need for Orientation was the sum of the respondent's standard (Z) scores on two items: the first was an item assessing interest in the Bayh-Lugar contest; the second, an item assessing how much more information the respondent felt he needed to understand the campaign.

Dependent Variables

The concept of agenda-setting is a relational one specifying a strong positive relationship between the emphases of mass media coverage and the salience of these topics to the individuals in the audience.[27] The strength of agenda-setting is operationally defined in terms of the rank-order correlation between the agenda ranking of the respondent and the agenda ranking of the mass media he or she uses.

It has been suggested earlier that the emphases of mass media coverage should be determined in terms of not merely the frequency of coverage but also the degree of conflict. It has also been suggested that the degree of importance that the audience attributes to these issues is to be measured through three different sources: personal, discriminatory, and paired-comparison agendas. Thus, the relationship between audience agenda and media agenda, as defined in this study, can be conceived of as a matrix consisting of six agenda-setting correlations: media agenda ranking based on frequency paired with personal, discriminatory, paired-comparison audience agendas; and the same audience agenda rankings compared with the media agenda rankings based on conflict and frequency.

Three rank-order correlations were computed for each respondent. The first, which will be referred to as the "Time 1 Agenda Score," was the rank-order correlation between the respondent's agenda at Time 1 and the agenda of the newspaper that he read (based on all articles appearing up to the start of the first interview period). The second dependent variable, to be called the "Time 2 Agenda Score," was the rank-order correlation between the respondent's agenda at Time 2 and the agenda of the newspaper he read (based on all articles appearing between the end of the first content analysis and the election). The third dependent variable, to be labeled as "Total Agenda Score," was the rank-order correlation between the respondent's agenda at Time 2 and the overall agenda of the newspaper he read (based on the entire content analysis of that newspaper).

Sample

A random sample of 660 students were drawn from the computer listings of Indiana University students compiled by the I. U. Data Systems. Included in the listings were those students who attended at least one course on the Bloomington campus of I. U. A total of 487 students out of 660 sampled were interviewed, producing a response rate of 73.8 percent. The sample of respondents consisted of: those who were interviewed at Time 1 only (during the final week of September, 1974: N=88); those who were interviewed at Time 2 only (during the five days preceding the election: N=155); and those students who were interviewed at both Time 1 and Time 2 (N=244). Considerable confidence can be placed in the total population estimates available from this survey, because a comparison of enrollment data computed from this sample with the actual statistics available from the University Registrar's Office revealed a difference, on the average of only 2.5 percent.

Data Analysis Technique

Path analysis was selected as the principal testing device for this study, because it allows the researcher the opportunity to uncover both the direct and indirect effect of each exogenous variable on each endogenous variable while controlling for all the remaining variables of the model. In this study, path analysis of variables measured at the same time, and path analysis across time, were used to assess the degree of change in the dependent variable, given the assumption of a one-unit change in each independent variable.[28] In other words, the synchronous and across-time path coefficients represent the direct impact of one variable upon another, after controlling for the indirect effects of the other variables.

Following Heise's suggestion, tests of significance were not given major consideration in this study, and results are interpreted that fall below traditional levels of statistical significance.[29] This will be done only under two conditions. First, when previous findings led us to expect the observed relationships. Second, and more important, this study used eight independent observations, since, when separated by time and conceptual model for testing the agenda-setting effect, there were eight different groups of causal models. A relationship that held across several models was persuasive even when one or more of the observations was not statistically significant.

FINDINGS

In what was described as a test of party philosophies and even an indicator of national direction, two young politicians of obvious prominence and ambitions--U. S. Senator Birch Bayh and Indianapolis mayor Richard Lugar--steered the 1974 U. S. Senatorial campaign with a rich supply of issues.

The rhetoric of the two men was sometimes remarkably similar, but there were clear differences in their emphases and priorities. On federal budget, for example, Lugar called a balanced budget "an absolute necessity," while Bayh put the stress on "cutting the fat out of the defense budget." Each discussed--and at least did not oppose--tax reform. Both recognized the essentiality of lower interest rates, but Lugar saw "tight money" as less of a villain than Bayh. There was a great deal of bickering about who was the real "big spender." Lugar accused Bayh of appropriating more federal money than requested by the Republican administration. Bayh countered by citing a 250-percent increase in Indianapolis city budget during Lugar's incumbency.

Economy and inflation was not of course the only issue in the Bayh-Lugar campaign. On factor that brought Lugar into the race was Bayh's liberal voting record and the conviction that Bayh failed to represent Hoosier sentiments on many social issues. Three of the most emotional of these--busing, gun control, and abortion--were staples of the political bout. Honesty in government and its corollary--political corruption--triggered a fair amount of bickering between the two politicians.

Content Analysis of Newspaper Articles

Altogether, 720 statements were coded for the four newspapers combined which mentioned the six major campaign issues. There were rather striking similarities among the four newspapers in their emphases on at least two of the campaign issues, economy and inflation and government spending. They were by far the most frequently mentioned issues, both in the early phase and toward the end of the campaign. The other four issues--abortion, amnesty, busing, and government corruption--were given far less coverage and showed relative instability in terms of their ranking between the two time periods and within each medium.

When the campaign stories were analyzed for the degree of conflict portrayed in the news, the amnesty issue showed more agreements than disagreements between the two candidates. In fact, both advocated for a pardon of Vietnam deserters and draft evaders on a case-by-case basis. On government spending and economy and inflation, Bayh and Lugar differed in their diagnosis of causes and in the prescription of remedies. Of particular interest is the reversal of the rankings of the two highly conflictual issues, economy and inflation and government spending. Economy/inflation was the most frequently mentioned issue, but the most conflict-laden issue appeared to be government spending.

Early in the campaign, abortion appeared not so serious an issue, with both men either not taking any stand on the issue or favoring abortion conditionally. Within the month of the election, however, Lugar hardened his position and announced his support of the Buckley amendment which would allow abortion only to save the mother's life. Bayh had refused to endorse the bill all the way. On this issue, there were far more agreements than disagreements at Time 1, but toward the end of the campaign the trend seemed to have been reversed.

Audience Agendas

The degree of importance that an audience member attributed to an issue was measured in three different ways: personal agenda, discriminatory agenda, and paired-comparison agenda.

The personal agenda was obtained by asking each respondent to name as many as four key issues raised in the Lugar-Bayh race that he or she was most concerned about. About half of the respondents had at least one salient issue. When all mentions were totalled, the ranking at Time 1 was as follows: first, economy and inflation followed by abortion, government spending, government corruption and busing (tied), and amnesty. At Time 2, the hierarchy was: economy and inflation, government spending, abortion, busing,

government corruption, and amnesty.

While there appeared to be a remarkable stability in the audiences' perception of issue salience across the two time periods (the rank-order correlation between Time 1 and Time 2 personal agendas was .90), a significant shift in ranking was found between the government spending issue (third at Time 2 but second at Time 2) and the abortion issue (second at Time 1 but third at Time 2). There was also a considerable disparity among the issues in terms of their frequency of mention. Such disparities were more pronounced at Time 2, with the amnesty issue registering only two mentions compared with 132 references to economy and inflation.

Respondents were also asked to cite reasons for either supporting or opposing a candidate, in response to the question: "As of this moment, is there anything about (Lugar, Bayh) that might make you want to vote (for, against) him?"

Analysis of the discriminatory agenda indicated that most of the reasons cited by the respondents were not based on the campaign issues but rather on candidates' "images." Of the 909 reasons generated by the respondents at Time 1, only 20 percent were devoted to issues of one kind or another. At Time 2 the proportion of issues increased slightly, to 28 percent of the 1103 reasons cited.

There were rather striking differences in the quality of reasons that the respondents generated for endorsing and opposing a candidate. Early in the campaign (Time 1) when issues were not well crystalized, respondents tended to cite issues much less frequently than in the Time 2 interview. When they did cite issues at all, these issues were more likely to be used for a negative assessment of candidates than for a positive evaluation. A favorable evaluation, on the other hand, tended to revolve around the candidates' general performance in office. In short, respondents--at least

in the early phase of the campaign--tended to "rationalize" in concrete terms any attempt for opposition of candidates, but "personalize" in general terms reasons for supporting a candidate. With an increased focus on issues toward the end of the campaign, however, issues were increasingly used by the respondents for positive as well as negative assessment of candidates.

In addition to the personal and discriminatory agendas, a full ranking of issues on their relative importance was obtained by paired-comparison method. At Time 1 and Time 2 the most salient issue was economy and inflation, followed by government corruption and government spending. Busing and amnesty issues remained at the bottom of the salience list for both time periods.

Rank-order correlations among the three different audience agendas--personal, discriminatory, and paired-comparison--were generally low and not statistically significant. The highest agreement was between personal and discriminatory agendas (rho=.533). The lowest correlations were between paired-comparison and discriminatory agendas (rho=.200) and between paired-comparison and personal agendas (rho=.447).

The lack of agreement in the three agenda rankings suggested that the issues used by respondents for candidate evaluation were not necessarily the ones that they considered personally salient. The low correlations also raised a methodological question in agenda-setting research that issue rankings may vary depending upon the context in which they are elicited from the respondents.

Aggregate Comparisons of Media Agenda with Audience Agenda

Agenda-setting hypothesis to date has largely been concerned about the correspondence between the amount of coverage given various issues in

the media and the level of salience the audience members attribute to these issues. The hypothesis posited in this study called for an analysis of newspaper stories in terms of both frequency of coverage and the degree of conflict portrayed in the news stories.

Two separate tests were performed in this study to obtain rank-order correlations between the audiences' and the media's agendas. One of these correlations was obtained by comparing the aggregated audience ranking of issues at Time 2 with the aggregated newspapers' frequency ranking of issues (based on the entire content analysis period). The other was the correlation between the audience's ranking at Time 2 and the newspapers' aggregated agenda ranking based on both frequency and conflict (covering the entire period).

The newspaper agenda rankings showed the highest amount of correspondence with the audiences' "personal agenda" (mean rho=.85), and the lowest correlation with the "discriminatory agenda" (mean rho=.44). The paired-comparison agenda showed an average correlation coefficient of .58 (see Table 2).

Table 2

Rank-Order Correlation (rho) Between Audiences' Personal, Discriminatory, and Paired-Comparison Agendas And the Newspapers' Agenda Rankings Based on Frequency and Frequency and Conflict

Audiences' Agendas	Newspapers' Agenda	
	Frequency	Frequency & Conflict
Personal	.69	1.00
Discriminatory	.28	.60
Paired-Comparison	.55	.60

The results showed that the audiences' agenda rankings correlate significantly higher with the newspapers' agenda rankings based on frequency and conflict (mean rho=.73) than with the newspapers' agenda rankings based on frequency alone (mean rho=.51). The "frequency & conflict" measurement improved the agenda-setting correlations by .22, lending some support for the hypothesis that issue conflict portrayed in news stories is linked to frequency of coverage in setting audience's agendas of important campaign issues.

Path Analysis Over Time

Previous agenda-setting studies suggested that an increase in need for orientation leads to increased newspaper use and to increased interpersonal discussion, which in turn result in learning more about saliences of issues presented in the media. Path analysis was used to assess the causal assertions of agenda-setting and more importantly, to test the viability of the "frequency & conflict" model of agenda-setting process.

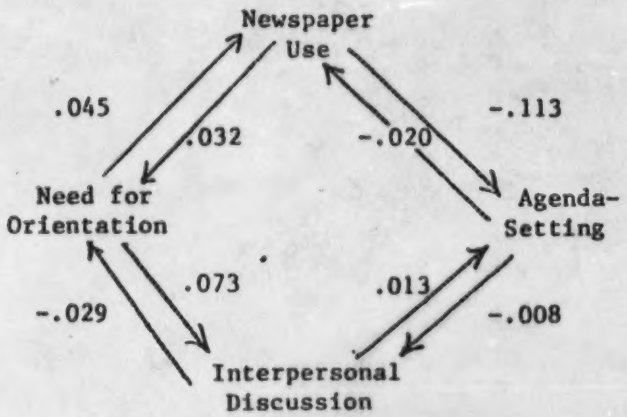
One technique for establishing causal ordering among the variables--whether a change in one variable precedes or follows a change in another variable--is path analysis over time.[30] By regressing all of the Time 1 variables onto each of the Time 2 variables and all of the Time 2 variables onto each of the Time 1 variables, it is possible to assess the effect of the variables upon one another over time. Two path models are tested separately, by defining the agenda-setting correlations either as a correlation of the audiences' rankings with the newspapers' rankings based on frequency alone or with the newspapers' rankings based on both frequency and conflict.

The path coefficients in the "frequency" model indicated almost no causal ordering among the variables in the model except for the linkage between newspaper use at Time 1 and agenda-setting at Time 2. The coefficient,

was negative, suggesting that the heavier users of newspapers tended to have personal rankings of issues somewhat less like the newspapers' rankings. (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Path Analysis Over Time: Frequency Model*



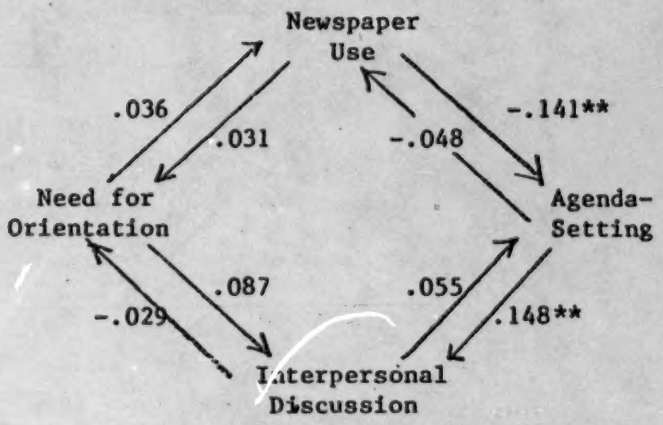
*Agenda-setting in this Frequency Model is defined as rank-order correlation between the audiences' ranking of issues and the newspapers' ranking based on frequency of coverage.

The "Frequency & Conflict" model showed statistically significant coefficients for the paths linking newspaper use and agenda-setting, and agenda-setting and interpersonal discussion (see Figure 4). It appeared that increased exposure to the newspapers contributed negatively to learning about conflicts in candidates' issue stance, which in turn led to the greater amount of interpersonal discussion about campaign topics.

Possibilities of a reversed causation--increased interpersonal discussion leading to learning more about issue conflicts and then to less newspaper use--were ruled out, because the magnitude of the path coefficients of the reversed relationship was considerably weaker than the path coefficients leading from newspaper use to agenda-setting and to interpersonal discussion.

Figure 4

Path Analysis Over Time: Conflict Model*



*Agenda-setting in the Conflict Model is defined as rank-order correlation between the audiences' ranking of issues and the newspapers' ranking based on frequency of coverage and degree of conflict.

** $p < .05$

None of the other path coefficients were significantly different from zero, although there was a weak tendency that increased interpersonal discussion led to less need for orientation. The results of the path analysis over time, summarized in Figure 5, suggested that an increased newspaper use contributed negatively to learning about conflict issues from the media, which in turn led to more interpersonal discussion.

Figure 5

Significant Coefficients from the Path Analysis Over Time

Newspaper Use ____ - ____ Learning about Conflict Issues ____ + ____ Interpersonal Discussion

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

To a large degree, agenda-setting research to date has dealt almost exclusively with the emphasis and display given various issues by the media and their cumulative impact on audience political cognitions. Little attention has been directed toward the news content itself. One such neglected dimension is issue conflict portrayed in news stories, an important feature of political campaign coverage.

Applying a longitudinal design, this study replicated and expanded the agenda-setting model using Indiana University student voters during the Bayh-Lugar senatorial campaign of 1974. The thesis was that degree of issue conflict portrayed in the news was linked to frequency of issue coverage in setting prospective student voters' agendas of important campaign issues. The research tested whether issue conflict portrayed in the news stories about the campaign affected perceived issue salience to a greater or lesser extent than issues on which the candidates agreed.

Heider's balance theory and Cartright and Harary's variation of the balance model provided a conceptual framework for the study. Two contending candidates (the P and O in the triad) vie for a competitive position, and often their confrontations revolve around a issue (X) to which both P and O are oriented. Balance theory would predict, among other things, a better recall of the issues on which the candidates disagreed than those issues lacking such issue conflict. This is so because the P-O relation in an election setting can be said to be one of mutual

dislikes and therefore an outside observer, (a prospective voter) would perceive a triad as balanced when there is a difference between candidate P's orientation toward an issue X and candidate O's orientation toward X.

The study also relied on Carter's affective relations model which postulates that the evaluative mode in a two-object situation is exclusive discrimination. That is, an individual, I, evaluates two objects, O_1 and O_2, on a number of relevant attributes, a_1, to make an exlusive discrimination between the two objects. Issue conflict portrayed in campaign news stories, it was postulated in this study, becomes a discriminating attribute on which the two candidates can be compared and evaluated. Because of its ability to ease the difficulty of voter decision making, it was further hypothesized, a conflictual issue is perceived as more salient than a non-conflictual issue by the audience.

A random sample of 487 Indiana University students was interviewed face to face in September, 1974. Of the initial sample, 244 were re-interviewed by telephone during the five days immediately preceding the November, 1974 election.

A structured questionnaire assessed their mass media use, interest in the senatorial campaign, uncertainty about candidate choice, frequency of interpersonal discussion, and the campaign issues about which they were concerned. Three types of audience agenda were obtained: personal agenda, i.e., the issues the respondents were most concerned about; discriminatory agenda, cited by the respondents as reasons for supporting and opposing the candidates; and paired-comparison agenda which indicated the relative importance of issues.

Results showed differences among the three audience agenda rankings, with an average inter-agenda agreement of .39. The findings of low

correlations among the audience agendas suggested that the issues of personal and private importance were one thing, and the issues of public importance were another. For example, economy and inflation was the overwhelming choice by the student sample as a personally important issue, but when it came down to the point of pitting one candidate against the other, the issue of abortion was most frequently cited as a reason for supporting or opposing a candidate.

The result may be interpreted in terms of the complexities of the issues and one's familiarity with them. That is, only a knowledgeable person can meaningfully relate to such complex and multifaceted issues as economy and inflation, while one can readily express his or her attitude either favoring or opposing abortion. Another viable explanation could be that abortion--not economy and inflation--was perceived as the most conflictual issue by the respondents. It is impossible to ascertain that plausibility of this explanation because the present survey did not tap perceived issue conflict. However, it is quite possible that our student voters frequently mentioned the abortion issue because it discriminated between the two candidates.

The observed differences in the audience agenda rankings may have been due to the artifact of the survey design. For example, the survey obtained the personal and discriminatory agendas through open-ended response, and the paired-comparison agenda by the forced-choice method. Secondly, the interview schedule was such that the discriminatory agenda was obtained first, followed by the personal and paired-comparison agendas.

The low correlations among the three audience agendas did, however, raise an important methodological problem in agenda-setting research, that is, agenda rankings may vary considerably depending upon the context in which they are elicited from the respondents.

Campaign coverage by the Indiana Daily Student, the Bloomington Herald-Telephone, the Indianapolis Star, and the Louisville Courier-Journal--the sources found to be of major importance for the student sample's news about the campaign--was content analyzed for frequency and degree of conflict.

In sharp contrast with the audience agenda rankings, there was a rather high correlation between each newspaper's agenda rankings. When each newspaper's agenda rankings based on frequency were compared with the same newspaper's agenda rankings based on frequency and conflict, the average correlation was .88 at Time 1, .95 at Time 2, and .96 for the total newspaper agenda.

The requirement for testing the research hypothesis was to be able to show greater agreement of the audience agenda rankings with media agenda rankings based on frequency and conflict than with the media agenda rankings based on frequency alone. To make a case for the specific influence of issue conflicts in the agenda-setting process, one must be able to document higher perceived salience of conflict issues than non-conflictual issues. One cannot do that if the two media agenda rankings are highly correlated. Unfortunately, such was the case with the present data. As a result, a more rigorous testing of the research hypothesis was not possible.

Despite the serious limitations posed by the high intra-newspaper correlations, the decision was to test the research hypothesis of the agenda-setting theory by dividing the respondents into four newspaper groups: those persons who read the Indiana Daily Student, the Bloomington Herald-Telephone, the Indianapolis Star, and the Louisville Courier-Journal, respectively. Two correlations were computed for each group: the "frequency" correlation, defined by the level of agreement between the group's

aggregate ranking of paired-comparison agendas and the newspaper's agenda rankings based on frequency; and the "frequency & conflict" correlation, measured by the level of agreement between the group's aggregate ranking of the paired-comparison agendas and the newspaper's agenda rankings based on frequency and confict.

The results failed to demonstrate a clear advantage of either the "frequency" correlation of the "frequency & conflict" correlation. With 12 pairs of correlations for comparison, e.g., four newspaper groups by three different time frames including Time 1, Time 2, and the aggregate total, five cases showed a slightly stronger correlation for the "frequency & conflict" hypothesis, two favored the "frequency" hypothesis, and the remaining five showed no difference.

A somewhat stronger support for the research hypothesis was found in the aggregate comparisons of the newspapers' agenda rankings (combining the four newspapers) with the audiences' aggregate agenda rankings (combining the readers of the four newspapers). The results showed the highest degree of agreement between the newspapers' aggregate agenda and the audiences' aggregate personal agenda, and the lowest correlation between the newspapers' aggregate agenda and the audiences' discriminatory agenda.

The results also indicated that the audiences' agenda rankings correlate significantly higher with the newspapers' agenda rankings based on frequency and conflict (mean rho=.73) than with the newspapers' agenda rankings based on frequency along (mean rho=.51). The "frequency and conflict" measurement of the newspapers' agenda rankings improved the agenda-setting correlation by .22.

Two general comments are in order about the aggregate comparisons between the media and audiences' agenda rankings. First, the observed

superior performance of the "frequency and conflict" hypothesis suggested that it has at least survived a chance of disconfirmation. Although correlation does not necessarily imply causation, the .22 difference in correlation supports the hypothesis.

A second thing to note is the relatively small "n" used to calculate the rank-order correlation. Although this study concerned itself with only six major campaign issues, the correlation coefficients between the media agenda rankings and the audiences' agenda rankings were far more stable that this small "n" suggests, because the issue rankings were based on nearly five hundred respondents and over 700 newspaper items analyzed. In short, the six issues were observation points at which data on larger numbers of cases, e.g. voters and newspaper articles, were aggregated. Furthermore, the correlational data was obtained from 12 subgroups, by dividing the total respondents into four newspaper groups according to the newspaper relied on most for information about the campaign, and by calculating agenda-setting correlations at three points in time, e.g., Time 1, Time 2, and combining Time 1 and Time 2. The correlational data showed that issue conflict portrayed in campaign news stories was a somewhat better predictor than the frequency of issue coverage of how the voters ranked the issues of personal and public importance.

An indirect support of the "frequency and conflict" hypothesis also came from the path analysis over time, which revealed no casual linkages among the variables in the "frequency" model (where newspapers' agenda rankings were based on frequency alone) but a number of significant path coefficients in the "frequency and conflict" model(where newspapers' agenda rankings were based on frequency and conflict). Unpredictedly,

however, increased newspaper use was found to contribute negatively to learning of issue conflict salience from the media, which in turn led to more interpersonal discussion.

Limitations of the Study

This study emphasized the role of issue conflict in the agenda-setting process, and tested the hypothesis that the magnitude of the correlation between the media's coverage of campaign issues and the perceived salience of those issues by the audience members should vary as a direct function of the frequency of issue coverage and the degree of issue conflict portrayed in the news stories about the political campaign. This sutdy revealed a pattern of this sort, although the relationship was weaker than anticipated. Several factors may account for the observed weak relationship.

First, the methodological model used for testing the hypothesis was a combination of the salience and priorities models of agenda-setting. That is, the study was concerned with only six major campaign issues. This arbitrary limitation on the number of issues could have acted in the direction of either weakening or strengthening positive results, although is should be noted that most media coverage and most respondents' answers focused on these six issues over all others.

The frailities of measurement techniques could also have affected the clarity of the findings. For example the content analysis of newspaper articles in terms of conflict, accord, and neutral statements yielded an intercoder reliability of .72, suggesting some ambiguity in the operational definitions for the analysis.

Finally, the use of university population makes it rather difficult to generalize the findings across other populations.

FOOTNOTES

[1]V. O. Key,Jr., Public Opinion and American Democracy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), p. 54.

[2]A Free and Responsible Press (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947).

[3]James K. Buckalew, "News Elements and Selection by Television News Editors," Journal of Broadcasting, 14:47-54 (Winter, 1969-70).

[4]James K. Buckalew, "The Local Radio News Editor as a Gatekeeper," Journal of Broadcasting, 18:211-221 (Spring, 1974).

[5]Robert W. Clyde and James K. Buckalew, "Inter-Media Standardization: A Q-Analysis of News Editors," Journalism Quarterly, 46:349-351 (Summer, 1969).

[6]F. J. Marceau, "Communication and Development: A Reconsideration," Public Opinion Quarterly, 26:235-245

[7]See: R. M. Williams Jr., "Conflict and Social Order: A Research Strategy for Complex Propositions," Journal of Social Issues, 28:1:11-26; and G. A. Lundberg, The Foundations of Sociology (New York: McMillan, 1939).

[8]L. A. Coser, The Foundations of Social Conflict (New York: Free Press, 1957).

[9]V. O. Key, Jr. op. cit.

[10]Phillip J. Tichenor, Jane M. Rodenkirchen, Clarice N. Olien and George A. Donohue, "Community Issues, Conflict, and Public Affairs Knowledge," in New Models for Mass Communication Research, ed. by Peter Clarke (Beverly Hills, Calif.:Sage Publications, 1973), pp. 45-80.

[11]Garrett J. O'Keefe, "Political Campaigns and Mass Communication Research," in Political Communication: Issues and Strategies for Research, ed. by Steven H. Chaffee (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1975), pp. 129-164.

[12]Lee B. Becker, Maxwell E. McCombs and Jack M. McLeod, "The Development of Political Cognitions," in Political Communication: Issues and Strategies for Research, ed. by Steven H. Chaffee (Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage Publications, 1975), pp. 21-64.

[13]Bruce H. Westley, "Setting the Political Agenda: What Makes It Change?" Journal of Communication, 26:2:43-47.

[14]See Stanley Kelley, Jr. and Thad W. Mirer, "The Simple Act of Voting," American Political Science Review, 68:2:572-591. Kelley and Mirer suggested that voters make their decision essentially on the basis of their "likes" and "dislikes" of the candidates. They describe the procedure in predicting respondent's votes on the basis of the Voter's Decision Rule:

(1) The voter canvasses his "likes" and "dislikes" of the leading candidates. (2) Weighing each "likes" and "dislikes" equally, the voter votes for the candidate toward whom he has the greatest net number of favorable attitudes, if there is such a candidate. (3) If no candidate has such

an advantage, the voter votes consistently with his party affiliation, if he has such. (4) If his attitude do not incline him toward one candidate more than toward another and if he does not identify with one of the major parties, the voter reaches a null decision.

[15]Although much of the research based on consistency theories has occurred in the last decade or two, the idea is not new. Credit for the original idea is typically given to:F. Heider, "Attitude and Cognitive Organization," Journal of Psychology, 21:107-112; "Social Perception and Phenomenal Causality," Psychological Review, 51:358-374; and The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1958).

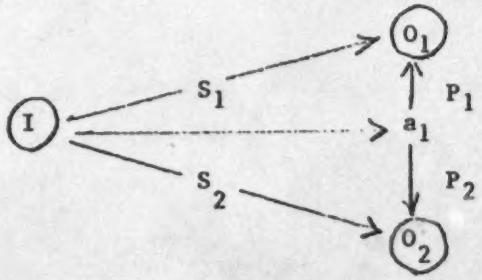
[16]D. Cartright and F. Harary, "Structural Balance: A Generalization of Heider's Theory," Psychological Review, 63:277-293.

[17]Ibid.

[18]R. B. Zajonc and E. Burnstein, "The Learning of Balanced and Unbalanced Social Structures," Journal of Personality, 33:153-163: and "Structural Balance, Reciprocity, and Positivity As Sources of Cognitive Balance," Journal of Personality, 33:570-585.

[19]H. B. Gerald and L. Fleischer, "Recall and Pleasantness of Balanced and Unbalanced Cognitive Structures," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 7:332-337.

[20]R. F. Carter, "Communication and Affective Relations," Journalism Quarterly, 42:203-212. While the Carter's model emphasizes the object to person (O--I) salience, one can also consider the attribute to person (a_1--I) salience by arguing that the perceived salience of the attribute, a_1, will vary according to its ability to discriminate between the two objects (O_1 and O_2). The model would look like this:



[21]R. F. Carter, "Dissonance and Exposure to Aversive Information," Journalism Quarterly, 46:37-42.

[22]Issues of course are but one of the many dimensions that may be used by prospective voters for exclusive discrimination between the candidates. Party affiliation and voter's "likes" and "dislikes" of the candidates were found to play an important role in voter's decision making.

[23]M. E. McCombs and H. E. Schulte, "Expanding the Domain of Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Communication," paper presented to the World Association for Public Opinion Research, Montreaux, Switzerland, 1975.

[24]Tichenor et al., op. cit.

[25]The causal model of agenda-setting was tested in a study by David H. Weaver, Taik Sup Auh, Timothy E. Stehle, and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, "A Path Analysis of Individual Agenda-Setting During the 1974 Indiana Senatorial Campaign," paper presented to the Theory and Methodology Division of the Association for Education in Journalism Convention, Ottawa, Canada, 1975.

[26]Doris A. Graber's study of press coverage of candidates and issues analyzed newspapers only, under the assumption that "while television is the most widely used medium, people who want more complete data than the constraints of visual coverage permit, tend to turn to the press for needed information. See Doris A. Graber, "Personal Qualities in Presidential Images: The Contribution of the Press," Midwest Journal of Political Science, (Spring, 1972), pp. 46-76.

[27]McCombs and Schulte, op. cit.

[28]Estimates of path coefficients based on standardized regression coefficients (Beta's) must meet the assumptions of linearity, homosdedasticity, noncollinearity, and constancy and equivalence of causal relations. When using path analysis over time, it is also necessary to assume that there are no instantaneous effects in the system, that the lag periods for all relationships are about the same, that the time required to measure the variables at one point in time is less than the causal lag period, and that the time between measurements is about the same as the causal lag period. These assumptions, however, need not be unduly restrictive if one is more interested in the pattern of relationships among variables than the precise values of the path coefficients (See David H. Heise, "Causal Inference from Panel Data," in Sociological Methodology 1970, ed. by Edgar R. Borgatta and George W. Borhnstedt (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1970), Ch. 1.

[29]See David R. Heise, "Problems in Path Analysis and Causal Inference," in Sociological Methodology 1969, ed. by Edgar R. Borgatta (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1969), Ch. 2. Heise points out that "there are no objective standards of even established conventions to guide one in deciding that an obtained path coefficient is negligible and may be treated as zero. "Testing the statistical significance of a path coefficient may not be a desirable procedure for determining whether it is near zero," Heise (p. 61) points out, since "if samples are small, then excessively large values of path coefficients might be treated as negligible; if samples are quite large...then a path coefficient which could be considered negligible in an absolute sense might be found to be statistically significant."

[30]Heise, op. cit.